

✘ GGD Amsterdam



Selection indicators for quiet areas and implementation

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Project partners

Partners:

1. Municipal Health Service
2. Department for Environment & Building
3. Department for Physical Planning (communication)
4. Department for Research and Statistics (survey)

co financed by Ministry of Housing, Spatial planning
and the Environment



This presentation

Partners:

1. The survey in Amsterdam
2. Results of the public campaign
3. Low-noise maps
4. Noise level as an indicator
5. The quality of public spaces
6. A policy for quiet/high quality areas



Survey

To investigate the opinion of Amsterdam citizens on ...

- the need for quietness
- quiet places they visit and what they do there
- characteristics of a quiet place

145 quiet places, 2254 times mentioned

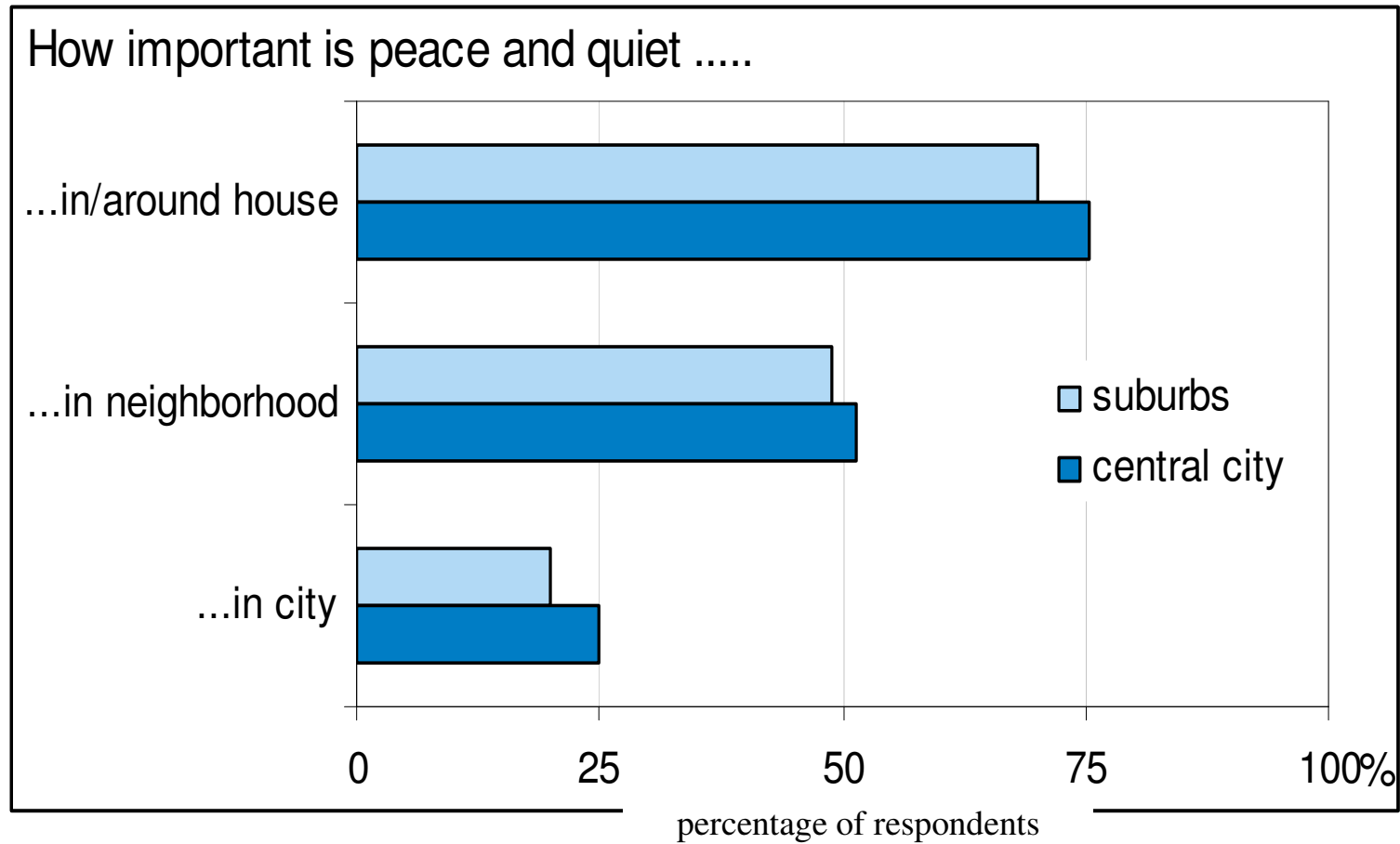
- 7 areas mentioned \geq 100 times

Results in paper “The need for quiet in Amsterdam: a survey”

(proc. Eurnoise2009)

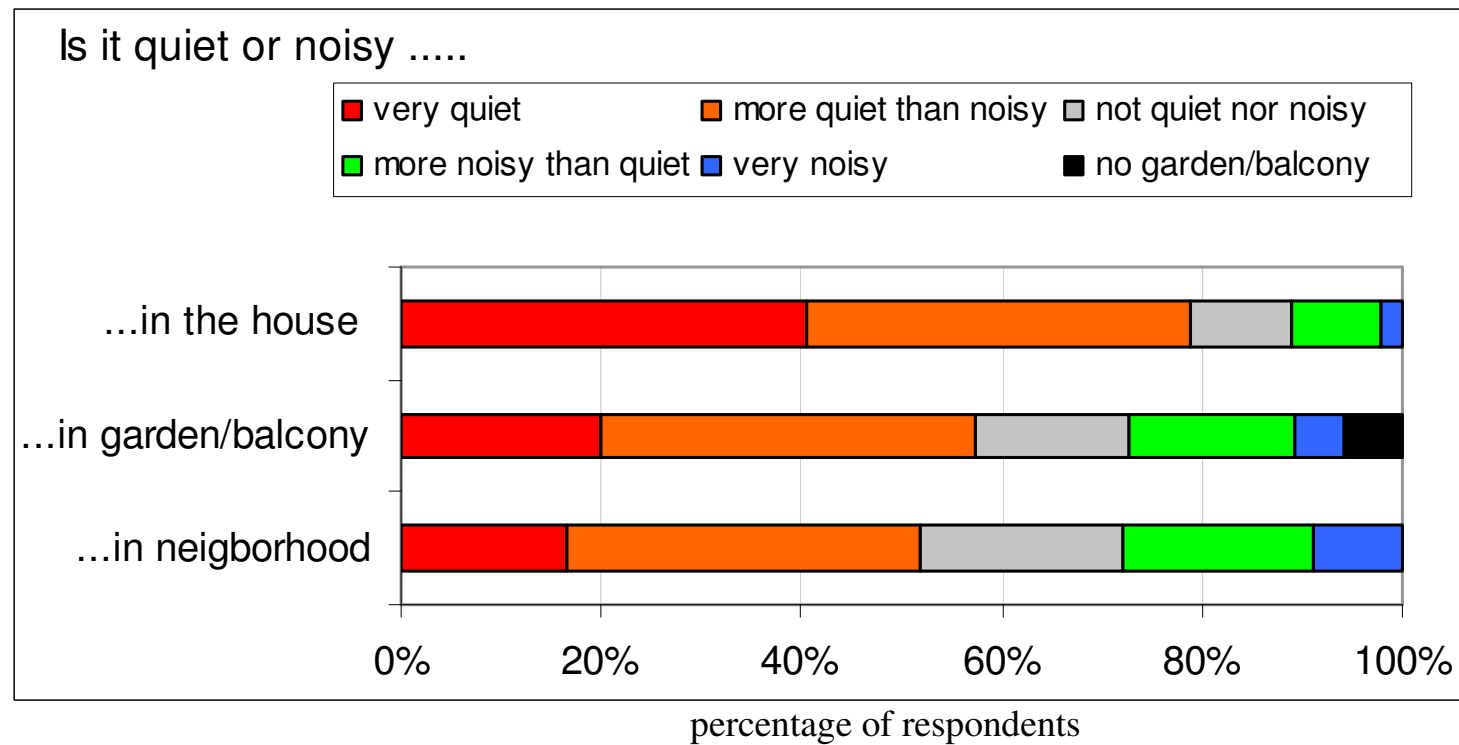


Need for quiet



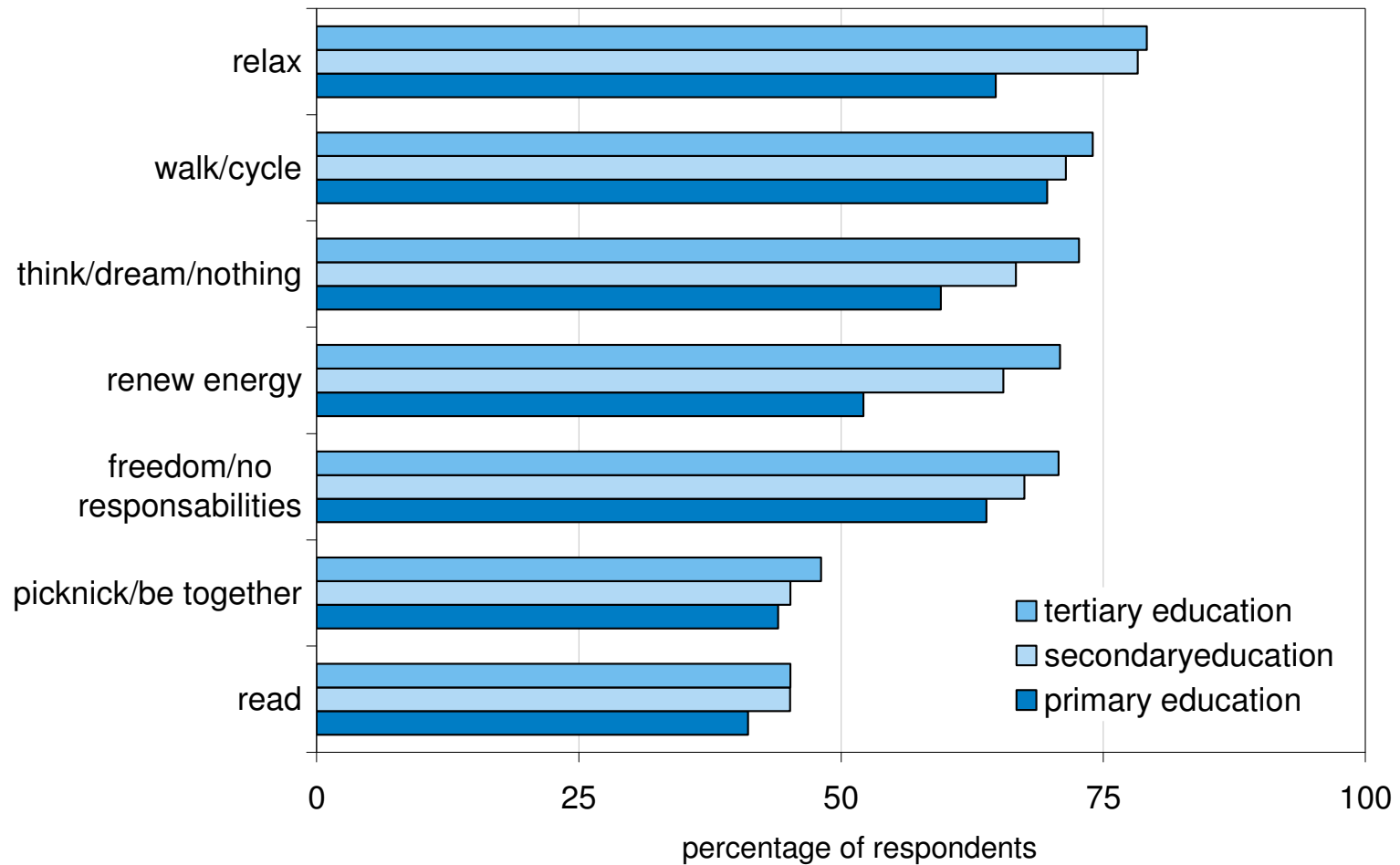


How quiet is it?



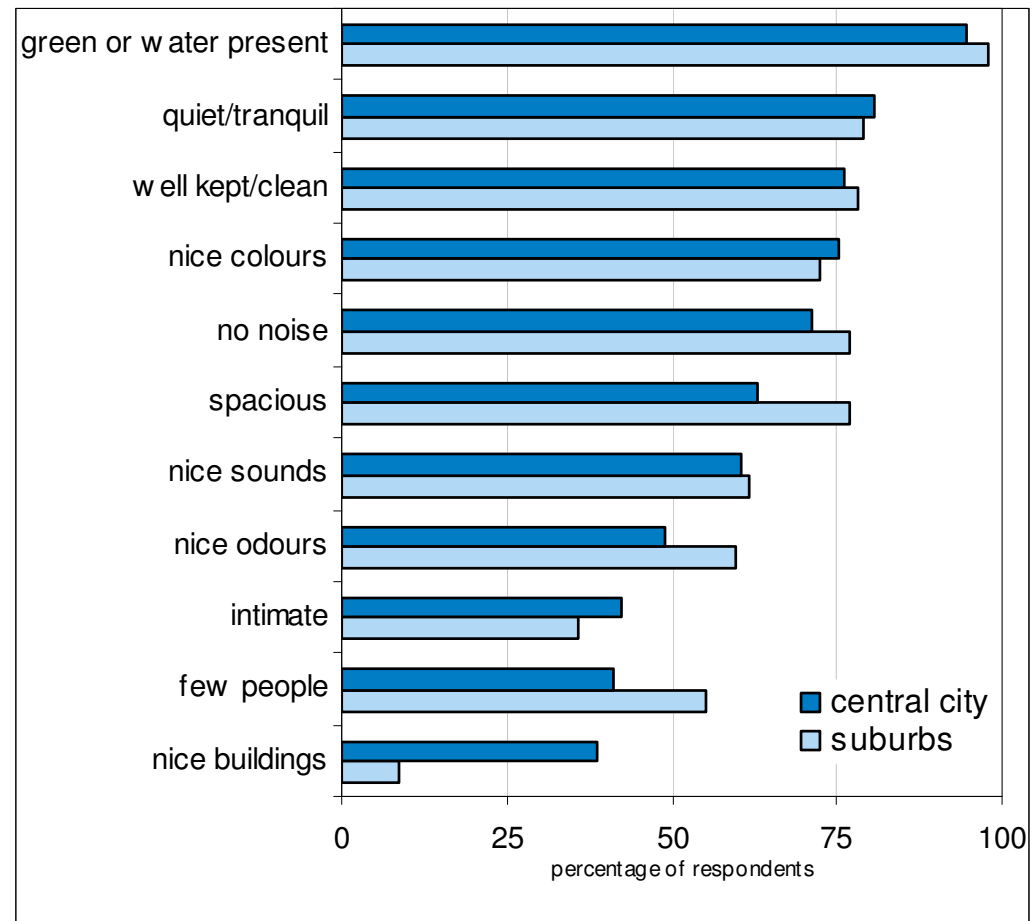


What do people do in quiet area?





What characterizes favourite, nearby quiet area?





Response to public campaign

Contributions of Amsterdam writers and alderman on project website about their appreciation of quiet

53 persons sent in their view, photograph or story

Often mentioned/implied:

- Importance of areas of beauty and quiet
- Quiet place contrast with busy city (quiet oasis)
- Historic or natural character, nice views



photographs of contributing persons



Low-noise maps

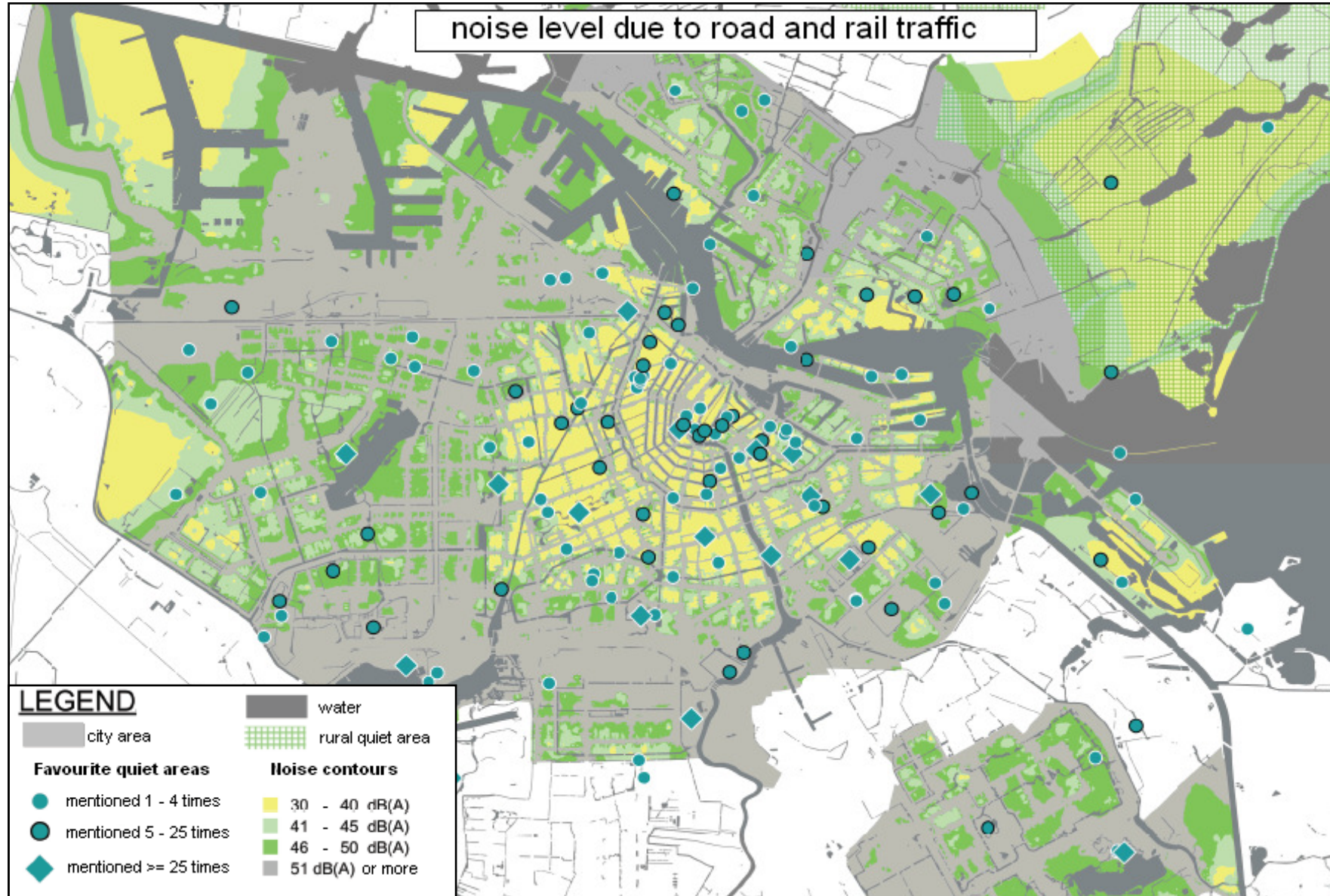
Low-noise map is inverted noise map: low levels highlighted

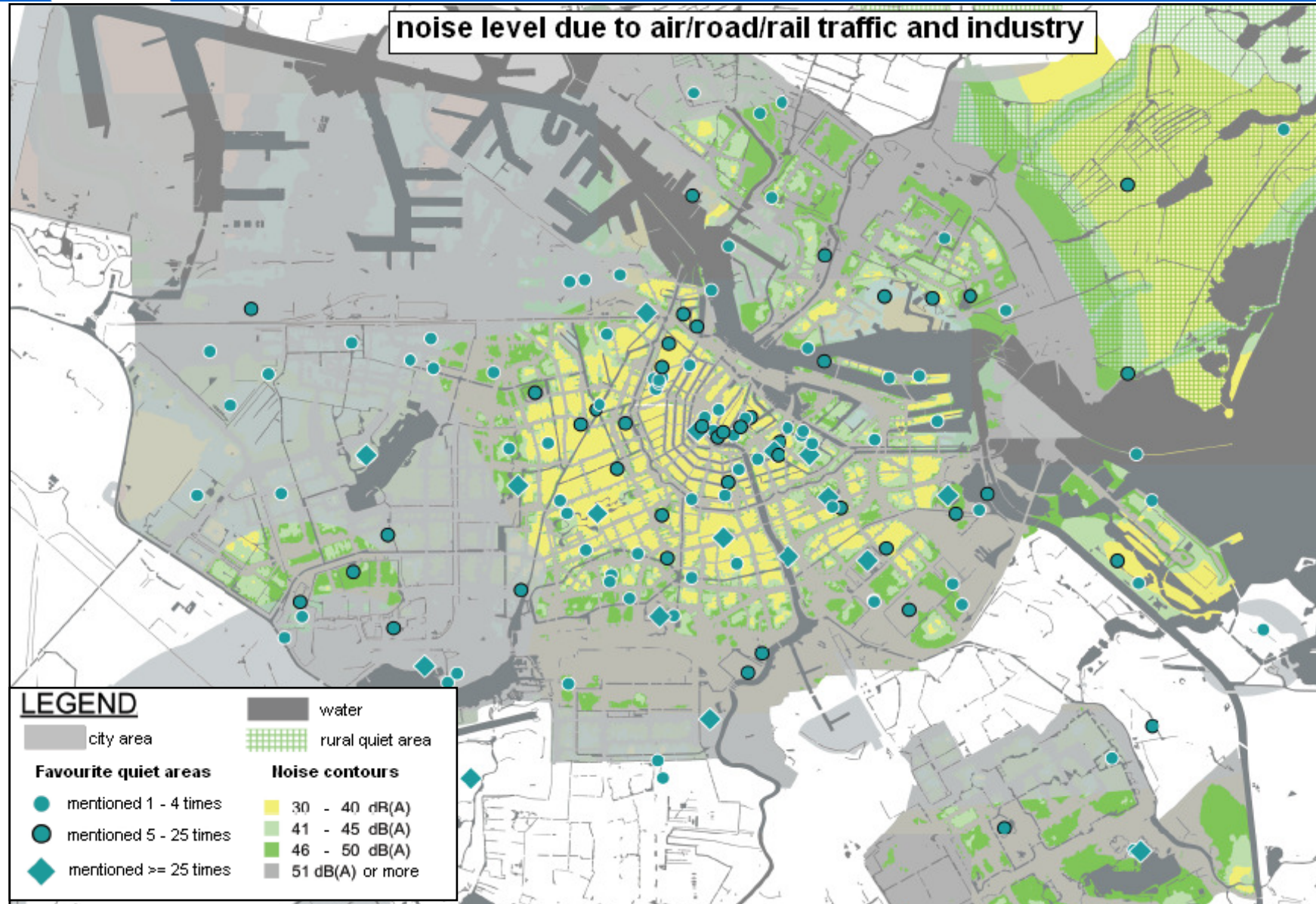
Two maps produced:

- road and rail traffic (incl. tram/metro) L_{day} 1.5 m above ground
- same plus 4 m L_{den} ($\approx L_{\text{day}}$) air traffic and 4 m ' L_{max} ' industry

Road traffic dominant source

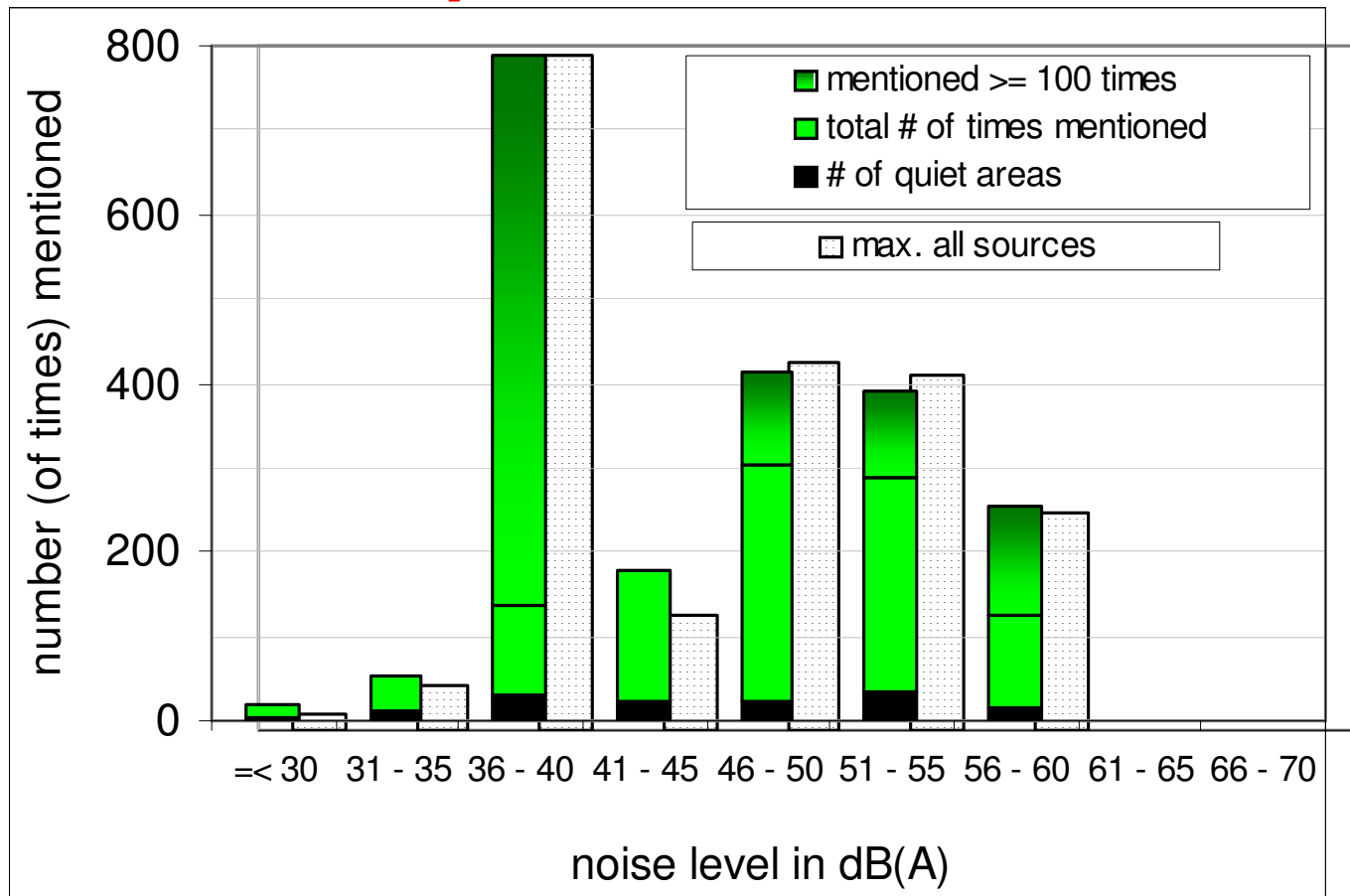
Maps include places mentioned in survey







Noise levels in central part of Amsterdam quiet areas



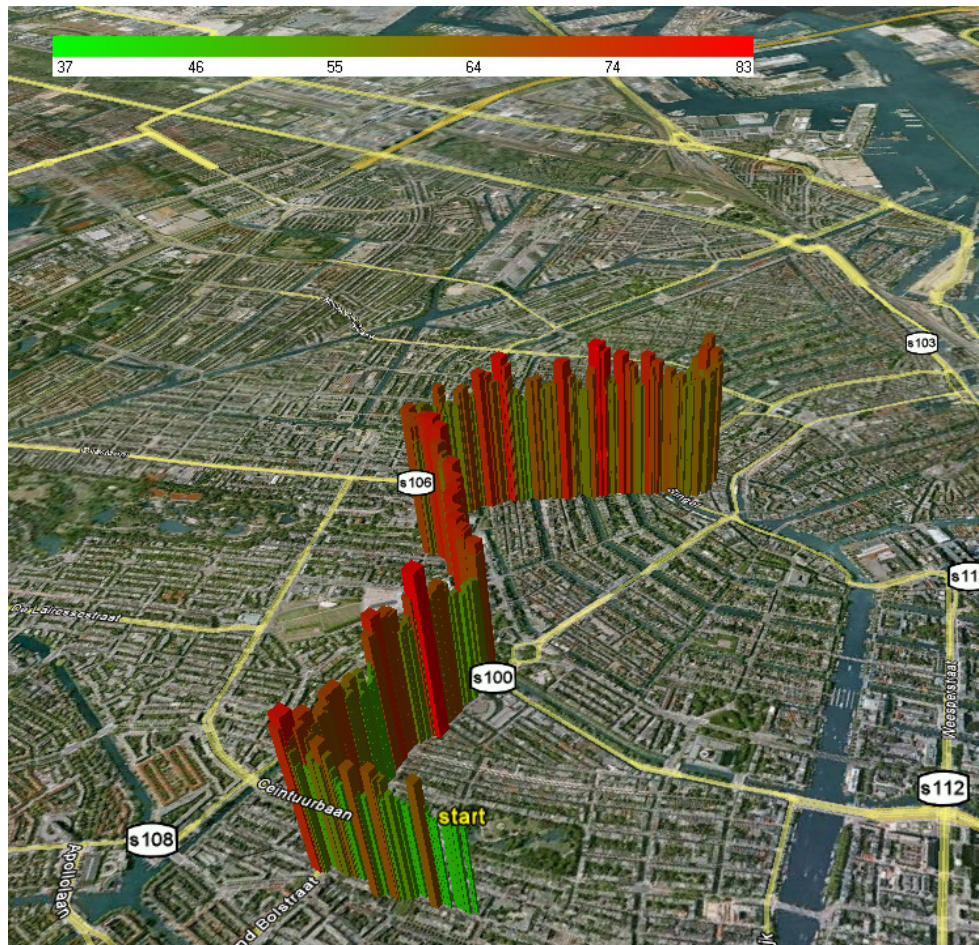


Noise levels in quiet areas

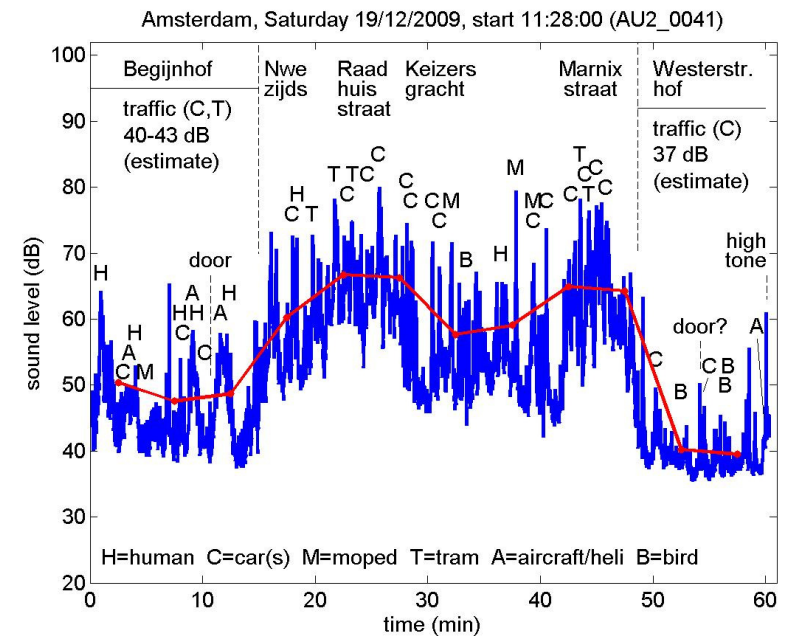
- Proposed limits (Norway, Denmark, Finland, Italy) vary from 45 to 55 dB(A) L_{den} or L_{Aeq}
- Quiet areas mentioned by Amsterdam citizens < 60 dB(A) L_{day} traffic noise in centre, with preference < 40 dB(A)
- Quiet area: when quieter than city around it
- Important that area is pleasant (green, blue, historic), tranquil and clean



Personal exposure: a (sound) walk in Amsterdam



GPS tracking +
sound measurement



Provided by Erik Salomons, TNO



The quality of public spaces

- The overall quality of an urban public space is most important
- Quality includes sound, sight, odour, intimacy, liveliness, cleanliness, safety
- Desired visual and acoustic qualities also depend on function: relaxation, sports, play, meeting place, transit
- An area has more potential when green, blue or historic, tranquil and clean



More people, less cars



then for traffic



now for pedestrians



then a parking lot



now a lively space



Sports and play, a meeting place for all





Areas that are city oases





Areas that could be city oases





Aim of a quiet areas policy

- *Urban quiet areas*: these can be small (city oases) and usually are not protected as such –except by their users
- *Parks*: important as urban quiet areas; due to their size the central parts are often quiet.
- *Natural areas and countryside*: areas further from the city's bustle for outdoor activities and recreation



No single issue policy

- Quietness is one of several qualities of urban areas.
- High quality public areas may (also) serve other purposes and still be attractive acoustically
- An area can be quiet with traffic noise levels $< 60 \text{ dB(A) } L_{\text{day}}$ in its centre and when quieter than city around it
- Lower levels are better but high levels can be compensated by other qualities



A high quality area is a healthy area

A healthy area is:

- an area with a low exposure to environmental hazards
- an area that people find pleasant
- an area that stimulates healthy behaviour



A policy for high quality urban areas

- Protect public spaces with existing high quality.
- Improve public spaces areas with potential high quality. There are many small spaces that mainly need refurbishment and/or cleaning. And people!
- Add high quality areas; every neighbourhood needs them.
- Desired quality depends on (intended) use; does it change over time? Are design and equipment suitable?
- Monitor the use of public spaces. Users must feel safe and welcome.



Quietness as part of the policy (1)

- City park management must consider quietness as a distinctive quality alongside recreational, natural and visual qualities. It may need (more) protection in at least part of the parks.
- City treasures/oases should be protected because of their acoustic, visual, architectural and/or historical value. City authorities must protect such high quality spaces, preferably by a special agency or commission. This agency can investigate on its own initiative or when asked by others including residents.



Quietness as part of the policy (2)

- Quiet areas are high quality public areas meant and fit for relaxing and meeting.
- The ultimate criterion is: *'quiet' is the (relative) absence of sounds that are unnecessary and not appropriate to the area.*
- At the 'white spots' on the EU noise maps, noise levels (< 55 dBA Lden) are sufficiently low.
As even higher levels can still be perceived as quiet, a restriction to the white spots implies a measure of ambition.



The end

